

GORDON H. SMITH
OREGONEX PARTE OR LATE FILED
United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3704

February 4.2003

COMMITTEES:
FINANCE
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ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
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INDIAN AFFAIRS**ORIGINAL**Ms. Marlene Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
CY-B402
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20544**RECEIVED**

FEB - 4 2003

Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary**RE:** WC Docket No. 03-11**Dear** Secretary Dortch;

I am writing to encourage the Federal Communications Commission to support Qwest Communications' application to provide long-distance service to Oregonians. I believe that Qwest has fulfilled all obligations and successfully opened Oregon's market to competition.

Qwest has been a leader in bringing better service and better technology to both rural and urban areas of Oregon. Since 1999, Qwest has spent \$50 million in Oregon to wire schools and connect all Oregon high schools with two-way interactive video, and spent \$70 million to bring the latest technology advances and benefits to rural Oregon.

Specifically, Qwest is in the process of building fiber rings that will be able to instantaneously reroute voice and data traffic to individual communities on the self-healing fiber rings if there is an interruption in service. Qwest's investment is a critical component of these smaller communities' ability to attract new businesses to less populated areas of our state.

The technology upgrades and more diversity Qwest is helping to provide will give my state enormous new potential for economic growth and provide Oregonians with some of the most advanced technology available. However, increased competition is as important to Oregon's economy as are the technological advances Qwest is delivering to the state. Companies contemplating our area always inquire about long distance service. At this time, there are limited choices and not all of them are appealing. Allowing Qwest to enter the long distance market in Oregon would result in more choices, better service and ultimately a much-needed boost to our local economies.

Qwest has invested heavily in its own network in order to open the local market, resulting in improved service and increased local competition. In Oregon, competitors have easy access to over 88 percent of Qwest's customers through equipment they have collocated in Qwest facilities. Numerous other telecommunications providers now serve businesses and new choices for residential customers continue to grow.

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The key to encouraging long-distance companies to start providing local service in Oregon will be Qwest's re-entry into the long-distance business. Once Qwest receives approval to re-enter the long-distance market in Oregon, even more competitors will make the decision to provide service to residential customers, and more Oregonians will see lower prices, more choices and better service.

Better service, far-reaching deployment of the newest technology and increased competition show that our largest telecommunications provider has and will continue to serve my state very well - as both a local service and long distance provider

I urge you to give states like Oregon the tools we need to continue to grow our economies and to sustain both our rural and urban quality of life. To achieve that, I urge you to support Qwest's application to provide long distance service to all Oregonians who want it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G.H. Smith", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Gordon H. Smith
United States Senator